

ADDITIONAL FEES:

A check in the amount of \$144.00 is enclosed to cover the cost of 8 additional claims in excess of 20 total. Should the check prove insufficient for any reason, authorization is hereby given to charge any such deficiency to our Deposit Account No. 01-0268.

REMARKS

To place this application in better condition for a complete action on the merits, the specification has been suitably revised to correct informalities, provide antecedent basis for newly added claim language, and bring it into better conformance with U.S. practice. A partial substitute specification is enclosed herewith consisting of pages 1-11 of the original specification re-typed in smooth form to incorporate the revisions shown in the marked-up copy of the original specification also submitted herewith. Applicants' undersigned attorney states that the partial substitute specification does not introduce impermissible new matter into the disclosure. A new abstract which more clearly reflects the invention to which the claims are directed has been substituted for the original abstract.

Original claims 1-19 have been amended in formal respects to improve the wording and place them in better conformance with U.S. practice. Attached hereto is a marked-

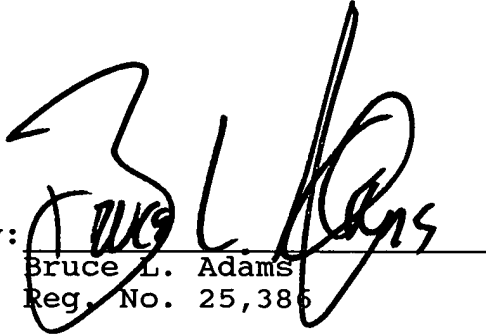
up version of the changes made to claims 1-19 by the current amendment.

To obtain a fuller scope of coverage, new claims 20-28 have been added.

Early and favorable action are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
ADAMS & WILKS
Attorneys for Applicants

By:


Bruce L. Adams
Reg. No. 25,386

50 Broadway - 31st Floor
New York, NY 10004
(212) 809-3700

MAILING CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents & Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on the date indicated below.


Bruce L. Adams

Attorney Name

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Claims 1-19 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system configured [so as] to enable [a coupon reception counter to] use and redemption of [an] issued electronic [coupon] coupons that are in electronic or printed form [via any kind of coupon reception means], the electronic coupon issuing system [characterized by] comprising:

an electronic coupon server having a database for storing a plurality of [an] electronic coupons [coupon generation approval registration means for registering information] and for storing information regarding [approval of generation of the electronic coupon; an electronic coupon acquisition registration means for registering] requests for acquisition of the electronic coupons including [coupon in association with] IDs [information] of redemption media used for redemption of the [an] electronic coupons, the redemption media being [coupon usage medium that is] presented by consumers at the point of sale when the electronic coupons are [coupon is] redeemed, [used;] and [an electronic coupon] search means for receiving the IDs [information] of the redemption media [electronic coupon usage medium] and searching the server database for [an] electronic coupons

[coupon] that are [is] useable in connection with the IDs [information]; and

an electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal for receiving the redemption media [electronic coupon usage medium] at the point of purchase, [and] inquiring with the electronic coupon search means of the electronic coupon server whether an electronic coupon exists for a given purchase, and [at the same time] approving the use of useable electronic coupons;

wherein the electronic coupon [acquisition registration means of the electronic coupon] server receives a request for acquisition of an electronic coupon from an electronic coupon registration terminal and stores [registers electronic coupon acquisition information association with] the ID [information] of the redemption media [electronic coupon usage medium] in correlation with the electronic coupon; and

the electronic coupon search means receives the ID [information] of the redemption media [electronic coupon medium] and information regarding the intended use [which have been sent] from the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal, [;] performs a search [searches] to determine whether or not an electronic coupon useable for the ID of the redemption media [information] and for the intended use

exists, [;] and sends results of [from] the search to the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal.

2. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 1; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon server accumulates [has an electronic coupon usage information accumulation means for accumulating] the search results of [from the] searches performed by the electronic coupon search means and accumulates [accumulating] electronic coupon usage information.

3. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 1; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon registration terminal is at least one of a mobile telephone, [or] a computer [which is] connected to a network, or a digital broadcast reception terminal.

4. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 1; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupons [used by the electronic coupon reception terminal] are at least one of coupons for [any of a variety of] discounts, [any of a variety of] benefits, or [any of a variety of] tickets.

5. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 1; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal prints [has a function of printing] out [and using] the electronic coupon.

6. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 5; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal prints out the electronic coupon as a bar code [and uses the bar code].

7. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 1; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption media include at least one of [usage medium is a] credit cards [card], [a] debit cards, [card, any of a variety of] point-accumulation cards, or [cards or any of a variety of] mileage accumulation cards.

8. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 7; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption media comprises [usage medium is a] credit cards, [and] the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal serves as a credit card payment authorization [settlement] terminal, and

the [this] electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal is connected to the electronic coupon server via a credit card settlement center or via a relay center for relaying information to a credit card payment authorization [settlement] center.

9. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 8; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal simultaneously dispatches a search for the electronic coupon and a request for approval for a credit card purchase authorization [settlement], and when the electronic coupon is useable for a discount, the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal sends out a second request for a credit card purchase authorization [settlement] at a discounted price indicated by the electronic coupon.

10. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to [as claimed in] claim 8; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption [reception] terminal and the credit card payment authorization [settlement] center or the relay center which relays information to the credit card payment authorization [settlement] center are connected wirelessly.

11. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method configured [so as] to enable redemption of electronic or printed coupons, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of coupons; [a coupon reception counter to use an issued electronic coupon via any kind of coupon reception means, the electronic coupon issuing method being characterized by: registering approval information for generation of the electronic coupon;]

receiving a request for acquisition of an [the] electronic coupon and storing [registering] electronic coupon acquisition information in association with ID information of an [the] electronic coupon redemption [usage] medium to be used at the point of sale for redemption of the electronic coupon; and,

upon receipt [reception] of the electronic coupon redemption [usage] medium, performing a search of the stored electronic coupons to determine whether there exists an electronic coupon that is usable with [makes] the electronic coupon redemption [usage] medium [usable], and approving [the] use of the electronic coupon redemption [usage] medium when [in the case that] a usable electronic coupon exists.

12. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to [as claimed in] claim 11; [,] further comprising the step of [characterized by] accumulating electronic coupon usage information.

13. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method as claimed in claim 11; further comprising the step of requesting an [, further characterized by registration of the] electronic coupon by use of [coupons being performed by] a mobile telephone or a computer which is connected to a network, or by a digital broadcast reception terminal.

14. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method as claimed in claim 11; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupons are coupons for [coupon is any of a variety of] discounts, benefits or tickets.

15. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method as claimed in claim 11; further comprising the step of printing out [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon [is printed out and used].

16. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to [as claimed in] claim 15; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon is printed out [and used] as a bar code.

17. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to [as claimed in] claim 11; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption [usage] medium is at least one of a credit card, a debit card,

a [any of a variety of] point accumulation card, [cards,] or [any of] a [variety of] mileage accumulation card [cards].

18. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to [as claimed in] claim 17; wherein [, further characterized in that] the electronic coupon redemption [usage] medium is a credit card; and further comprising the step of using a [the] credit card authorization [settlement] terminal [serves] to perform redemption [reception] of the electronic coupon.

19. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to [as claimed in] claim 18; [,] further comprising the step of [characterized by performing the reception of the electronic coupon and] performing [the] credit card authorization using the credit card authorization terminal [settlement simultaneously], and the step of performing [the] credit card authorization is performed [settlement] at a discounted price when an electronic coupon for the discounted price [a discount] is usable.